AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) In a system having at least one aggregation module, a method for providing real-time streaming media from a wide area network to the plurality of receivers, the method comprising the following acts:

(a) receiving by at least one aggregation module a request for real-time streaming media accessible via a wide area network from each of a plurality of receivers, each request comprising an identifier representative of the receiver making the request and a recitation of the access rights associated with the requesting receiver, and the aggregation module storing a list of each of the unique identifiers received for future access;

(b) after acts (a), the at least one aggregation module determining whether the number of requests received is greater than a defined maximum number of requests that maintains a connection rate of a shared network at a preferred level and aggregating a plurality of requests into a single request for a single copy of the real-time streaming media and sending the single request for a single copy of the real-time streaming media to the wide area network;

(c) after act (b), buffering the single copy of the real-time streaming media at the at least one aggregation module;

(d) using the buffered single copy of the real-time streaming media, delivering the streaming media to the plurality of receivers; and

(e) the aggregation module tracking the activities of receivers and identifying frequently requested real-time streaming or continuous media.

2. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the at least one aggregation module is remote from at least one of the plurality of receivers.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising selecting a media format for delivering the streaming media to the plurality of receivers.

6. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising delivering the streaming media to each of the plurality of receivers by a multicast broadcast.

7. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising converting the single copy of the streaming media into a standardized media format.

8. (Original) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the system comprises a cable system having a plurality of used channels for display broadcast programming to the plurality of receivers and a plurality of unused channels.

9. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 8, further comprising identifying when to deliver the single copy of the real-time streaming media to the plurality of receivers by at least one of the plurality of unused channels.

10. (Previously Presented) A computer program product comprising a computer-readable storage medium carrying computer-executable instructions for implementing the method of claim 1.

11. (Currently Amended) In a system having at least one aggregation module, a method for providing streaming media from a network to the plurality of receivers, the method comprising the following acts:

(a) receiving at an aggregation module a request for streaming media accessible via a network from each of a plurality of receivers, each request comprising an identifier representative of the receiver making the request and a recitation of the access rights associated with the requesting receiver, the aggregation module storing a list of each of the unique identifiers received for future access, the aggregation module tracking the activities of receivers and identifying frequently requested real-time streaming or continuous media, and the aggregation module determining whether the number of requests received is greater than a defined maximum number of requests that maintains a connection rate of a shared network at a preferred level;

(b) after act (a), aggregating a plurality of requests into a single request for a single copy of the real-time streaming media and sending the single request for a single copy of the streaming media to the network through a proxy module in communication with the aggregation module;

(c) after act (b), receiving the single copy of the streaming media at the aggregation module

(d) buffering the copy of the streaming media at the aggregation module;

(e) delivering a stream of the buffered copy of the streaming media to a termination system for transmission to each of the plurality of receivers, wherein each of the plurality of receivers receives substantially the same packets of the buffered copy of the streaming media.

12. (Original) A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the network is selected from the group consisting of a wide area network and a local area network.

13. (Original) A method as recited in claim 12, wherein the network is the Internet.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 11, further comprising selecting a media format for delivering the streaming media to each of the plurality of receivers.

16. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 15, further comprising delivering a plurality of instances of the streaming media to the plurality of receivers.

17. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 15, further comprising delivering a single instance of the streaming media to the plurality of receivers.

18. (Original) A method as recited in claim 15, wherein each of the plurality of receivers includes at least one channel for receiving programming and at least one unused channel in the associated system.

19. (Original) A method as recited in claim 18, wherein the system is a cable system, a television system, or a satellite system.

20. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 11, further comprising converting the copy of the streaming media into a standardized media format.

21. (Original) A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the request comprises at least one addressing mechanism for network resources and at least one identifier representative of a requesting receiver of the plurality of receivers delivering the request to the aggregation module.

22. (Original) A method as recited in claim 21, further comprising comparing a rating associated with the at least one addressing mechanism for network resources against a stored list of ratings to determine whether content associated with the at least one addressing mechanism for network resources is to be delivered to the requesting receiver.

23. (Original) A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the at least one addressing mechanism for network resources comprises a uniform resource locator.

24. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the comparing occurs upon the proxy module delivering content retrieved from the network to the aggregation module.

25. (Previously Presented) A computer program product comprising a computer-readable storage medium carrying computer-executable instructions for implementing the method of claim 11.

26. (Previously Presented) A computer program product as recited in claim 25, wherein the computer-executable instructions further comprise program code means for generating each request from each of the plurality of receivers using an input device.

27. (Previously Presented) A computer program product as recited in claim 25, wherein the computer-executable instructions further comprise program code means for delivering the buffered single copy of the streaming media from the aggregation module.

28. (Previously Presented) A computer program product as recited in claim 27, wherein the computer-executable instructions further comprise program code means for delivering the cached single copy of the streaming media from the aggregation module to the termination system.

29. (Previously Presented) A computer program product as recited in claim 27, wherein the computer-executable instructions further comprise program code means for selecting a media format for delivering the streaming media to each of the plurality of receivers.

30. (Previously Presented) A computer program product as recited in claim 27, wherein the computer-executable instructions further comprise program code means for converting the single copy of the streaming media into a standardized media format.

31-37 (Cancelled)

38. (Currently Amended) A system for displaying media retrieved from a network to a plurality of receivers, the system comprising:

(a) a source module storing media;

(b) a plurality of receivers communicating with the source module via a network, each of the plurality of receivers being configured to generate a request and receive the media from the source module at a first connection rate; and

(c) an access module communicating with the plurality of receivers and the source module through the network, the access module being configured to

receive the request for media, the request comprising an identifier representative of the receiver making the request and a recitation of the access rights associated with the requesting receiver,

track the activities of receivers and identifying frequently requested real-time streaming or continuous media,

determine whether a number of requests is greater than a defined maximum number of requests that maintains a connection rate of a shared network at a preferred level,

aggregate requests by removing redundant requests to create a single request for a single copy of the real-time streaming media,

send the single request for a single copy of the media to the network, and

then subsequently change the delivery of the streaming media from a first format to a multicast format based upon changes to the first connection rate as media is delivered to two or more of the plurality of receivers.

39. (Original) A system as recited in claim 38, wherein the source module comprises a server.

40. (Original) A system as recited in claim 38, wherein the access module comprises at least one of each of a proxy module, a parental control module, and an aggregation module.

41. (Original) A system as recited in claim 40, wherein the proxy module is configured to retrieve media requested by at least one of the plurality of receivers.

42. (Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 41, wherein the aggregation module is configured to convert the retrieved media into a standardized media format.

43. (Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 38, wherein the aggregation module is configured to dynamically vary delivery of the requested media as either independent streams or as a multicast depending on traffic load on the network.

44. (Cancelled)

45. (Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 38, wherein the aggregation module delivers a single instance of the requested media to the plurality of receivers, each of the plurality of receivers receiving the single instance of the media.

46. (Original) A system as recited in claim 45, wherein each of the plurality of receivers is capable of displaying a plurality of video channels, at least one of the plurality of video channels being unused.

47. (Original) A system as recited in claim 46, wherein the aggregation module delivers a single instance of the requested media to the plurality of receivers on the unused video channel.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the standardized media format is at least one of Windows Media, MPEG, Real, AVI, QuickTime, and Cinepaq.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein changing the delivery of the streaming media from a first format to a multicast format is performed when streaming media reduces connection performance by a defined percentage.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein changing the delivery of the streaming media from a first format to a multicast format is performed for receivers when a given number of the receivers request the same streaming media.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, further comprising displaying a notice to a user indicating the channel of the unused channel where the user can tune to access the real-time streaming media.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9, further comprising automatically and without user intervention tuning to the unused channel where the user can access the real-time streaming media.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein delivering the streaming media to the plurality of receivers comprises delivering multicast packets.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein delivering the streaming media to the plurality of receivers comprises delivering IP multicast packets.